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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 WARSAW 000720

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PL](#) [UP](#)

SUBJECT: POLAND: INCREASING FRUSTRATION WITH SITUATION IN  
UKRAINE

REF: A. BERLIN 805  
[1](#)B. KYIV 1091  
[1](#)C. WARSAW 597

Classified By: POLITICAL COUNSELOR DAN SAINZ FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)  
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[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: MFA officials told us that Warsaw remained committed to Ukraine's rapid Euro-Atlantic integration, but programs like the Eastern Partnership (ref C) can only do so much given the disruptive political infighting in Kyiv. The infighting had led to disappointing results during the "messy" June 17 visit of Polish FM Sikorski and German FM Steinmeier (ref A and B). One MFA official hoped Vice President Biden's upcoming visit would send a strong signal to Kyiv to "put the interests of the state above those of individual politicians." but lamented that nothing would change until after the Ukrainian presidential elections--if then. END SUMMARY.

POLAND CARES . . .  
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[1](#)2. (C) In addition to Poland's geopolitical concerns about Ukraine slipping completely under Russian influence, Anna Kostrzewa, Deputy Director of the MFA's Eastern Department, told us that the situation in Ukraine is important to Poland for three reasons:

- Polish firms are suffering, particularly due to delays in VAT tax refunds;
- there are no credible interlocutors in Ukraine with whom to discuss bilateral issues; and
- Ukraine's travails are bound to complicate efforts to improve Polish-Russian relations.

. . . BUT IS INCREASINGLY AGGRAVATED  
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[1](#)3. (C) Polish MFA officials and think tankers occasionally complain that Warsaw has taken the lead on Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic integration, but Kyiv's lack of progress on reforms and its constant internal bickering is hurting Poland's credibility in the EU. MFA officials welcomed the opportunity to work with Germany on the Sikorski and Steinmeier visit to Kyiv, despite differences of opinion with Germany on Ukraine's EU and NATO integration. The joint visit provided a means to highlight the situation in Ukraine as a "European problem," not just a "Polish" issue.

A MESSY VISIT TO KYIV  
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[1](#)4. (C) In a June 17 briefing to foreign diplomats, Jaroslaw Bratkiewicz, Director of the MFA's Eastern Department, cast the Sikorski/Steinmeier visit in more positive terms than the media, which characterized the trip as a "fiasco." According to Bratkiewicz, the Ukrainians generally affirmed Kyiv's EU

aspirations, but subsequently launched into attacks against their political opponents. Sikorski repeatedly urged the Ukrainians to finalize the association agreement with the EU during the term of Sweden's EU Presidency, which would likely be sympathetic to Kyiv's interests. Yushchenko rejected Sikorski's criticism that Ukraine had missed an opportunity to join the EU, intimating that Ukraine's entry had been blocked by Germany, among other EU countries. None of our MFA interlocutors confirmed reports that Ukrainian President Yushchenko had sent Sikorski and Steinmeier on a forced sightseeing tour (ref b), but Ukraine desk officer Maciej Zwirski conceded that Yushchenko had played some "scheduling games" with the two ministers. He added that the trip highlighted the lack of "credible interlocutors" in Kyiv and expressed the hope that Vice President Biden's upcoming trip would have a positive impact. However, he warned that the Vice President should be prepared for a difficult visit. He emphasized that the political infighting would probably continue until at least the Presidential elections, and "even in the best case scenario, the election will probably not magically solve all problems."

COMMENT

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15. (C) Poland's championing of Ukraine's rapid Euro-Atlantic integration complicates another Polish goal -- improved Polish-Russian relations. Polish officials also appear increasingly aware that their advocacy of Ukraine under current circumstances affects Polish credibility in Brussels.

Poland is likely to tone down its support for Ukrainian integration until the situation in that country improves, but

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will continue practical work towards facilitating closer relations between Kyiv and Europe through the Eastern Partnership Program. In addition, the GoP will push bilateral initiatives, such as the recently implemented Polish-Ukrainian agreement on small border traffic--allowing Poles and Ukrainians living within 30 km of the border to cross without a visa.

ASHE